

Another Time

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Another Time

by [Bordementions](#)

Summary

What makes your Amelia, your Amelia?

Notes

I legiterally don't fucking know what to tag this shit, anyways this was a really old idea that I just rewrote and completely revamped cause the old doc was complete utter giant burning bag of smashed asshole (as my drill Sargent used to say).

Regardless uh yeah I really like the concept of if you can't even tell the difference of a perfect imitation, where does the problem fall? Probably morally or smth idk I'm not a philosopher. Ame has a lot of angst relative ideas which are really good and I think every single one in every timeline should be fucking miserable all the time and unintentionally (or intentionally) inflict that trauma and misery on others

Also if it wasn't clear I don't watch vtubers so all my characterization comes from being partly in the fandom and her wiki

The city was still waking up when you arrived.

The streets outside the bureau were damp from a light overnight drizzle, the dark asphalt reflecting the pale orange glow of the streetlamps that hadn't yet shut off.

Most businesses remained closed, though a few early-rising cafes were unlocking their doors in preparation for opening, venting the rich, comforting scent of fresh espresso and baked goods into the cool morning air.

Just another normal day. Just as it should be.

You pushed open the front door of the detective bureau, stepping inside as the familiar chime above the entrance rang softly. The office was quiet. It was that specific, comfortable brand of quiet that only existed when the rest of the world was still asleep.

Hanging your coat on the rack near the door, you set your bag down beside your desk and flipped on the lamp. Warm, yellow light spilled across the wood, illuminating the neat stacks of case files you'd left behind the evening before.

Nothing out of place. Nothing unusual. Exactly the way you liked it.

Settling into your chair with a faint creak of old leather, you loosened your tie and pulled open a drawer, the filing cabinet rattling in the stillness. You glanced over the active investigations: a missing persons report, two standard insurance fraud cases, and one bizarre, handwritten complaint involving a man who swore his neighbor's cat could teleport.

Normal. Perfectly normal for a human detective partner working in the orbit of an eccentric.

For a few minutes, the only sounds were the rhythmic scratching of your pen and the steady ticking of the wall clock. Then, another sound cut through the silence.

Click. Click. Click.

The rapid, frantic clacking of a keyboard was coming from deeper inside the office. You leaned back in your chair, shaking your head. There was only one other person insane enough to be here this early in the morning.

"Morning, Ame." You called out.

"Mm."

A distracted, half-hearted hum drifted from the adjacent room, immediately followed by another aggressive burst of typing.

You stood up and walked toward the main office. The sight waiting for you was exactly what you expected. Amelia Watson was buried behind her desk, her light-blond hair falling messy over her shoulders, her bright blue eyes locked onto a monitor.

Coffee stains marred several papers, three separate folders were spread out like a fan, and her pocket watch was gripped tightly in her left hand—her fingers mindlessly clicking it open and closed, open and closed, the gears glinting under the light.

Somehow, she was typing on her keyboard, reading an open case file upside down on her desk, and managing not to look at either.

"That can't possibly be comfortable," you said, gesturing toward the upside-down document.

"It saves time," she shot back, her eyes never wavering from the screen.

"It absolutely doesn't." You replied.

"It does."

"It doesn't."

"It does."

"It doesn't."

Amelia finally snapped her head up, a brilliant, mischievous grin breaking across her face. "Morning!"

"Good morning. Have you been here all night?"

"No." She paused, her eyes darting to the corner of the room.
"...Maybe."

"Ame."

"I took a nap!"

"When?"

"Three hours ago."

"That's not a nap, Ame."

"It counts if I intended it to be a nap," she reasoned, her grin widening. It was the exact same look she wore right before she pulled a prank. She spun lightly in her chair. "You got coffee yet?"

"No."

"Can you get me coffee?"

"You can get your own coffee."

"I could," she purred, leaning forward. "But if you get it for me, then I don't have to."

"Amazing logic. Truly."

"I know." She pointed a finger toward the door. "Large."

"No."

"Extra large."

"No."

"Extra, extra large, with a double shot."

"You don't need that much caffeine. Your heart is going to explode."

She pouted, widening her eyes in a practiced, shameless display of pure manipulation—a weaponized puppy-dog face she had perfected over years of partnership. "Please?"

You rolled your eyes, letting out a heavy sigh. "Don't do that, it might work."

"I know."

"You know you're awful, right?"

"I've been told."

"You tell yourself."

"Hey, then I've been told by a reliable source," she laughed.

You grabbed your coat off the rack. "One coffee."

"Two sugars!"

"I know."

"Maybe three."

"I know, Ame."

"A little cream!"

"I know. I've done this a thousand times."

"You're the best!" she called out as you stepped toward the exit.

"Ground pound your—"

You slammed the door before she could finish the sentence, her high-pitched laughter echoing down the hallway behind you.

Everything was normal.

Twenty minutes later, you returned. By now, the bureau was waking up. Phones were starting to ring in the outer offices, printers were humming, and the usual morning chaos was beginning to mount. You stepped back into the main room and set the piping-hot cup on her desk.

"Ooh." She practically lunged for it. "Thanks."

"You owe me."

"I owe you lots of things."

"Money."

"No."

"Mostly money, Ame. Cash."

"Only kind of," she mumbled around the rim of the cup. She took a long sip, letting out a deeply pleased hum. "Perfect."

"Obviously. I do it everyday."

"True." She leaned back, swirling the liquid in her cup, completely at

ease.

The conversation drifted naturally from there. You talked about the mundane day ahead, the upcoming schedules, and a weird suspect you'd interrogated last Tuesday. Then, with complete casualness, she spun a yarn about how an alternate version of herself from Timeline 642,001 had accidentally crashed a single-wheel motorcycle into a government building.

You didn't question it. You had stopped questioning the multi-timeline logistics, the alternate Ames, and the chaotic politics of Wattropolis years ago.

As she talked, her fingers began twirling a pen. You watched it spin seamlessly over her knuckles—one, two, three perfect rotations—before she caught it flawlessly. She kept talking without missing a beat. You looked away, heading back to your own desk to let the day properly begin.

Both of you fell into your respective grooves. You answered calls, filed reports, and organized paperwork. But as the clock ticked past mid-morning, a feeling began to fester.

It was a tiny, microscopic splinter in the back of your mind. Barely noticeable at first. You couldn't place it, couldn't justify it, but it lingered. You stared down at a standard report, realizing you had read the exact same sentence four times without processing a single word.

What was it?

You closed your eyes, meticulously reconstructing the morning in your head. The conversation. The coffee. The grin. The pettiness. The posture. The specific cadence of her voice. The clothes—the hat, the tie, the shoes.

Everything. Every single thing was perfect. Absolutely, flawlessly perfect.

No... it wasn't?

You opened your eyes and looked through the glass partition into Amelia's office. She was visible through the doorway, currently on the phone with someone. She was laughing, gesturing wildly with her left hand, completely animated. Exactly the way she always did.

Exactly. The way. She always did.

Your stomach plummeted into a cold, hollow void.

Working alongside Amelia Watson for years meant adapting to a reality where the laws of reality didn't apply. You had dealt with temporal anomalies, dimensional shifts, and the reality-warping headaches of time travel. But above all, you had met the Ames. So many Ames.

You had met Ames from different eras, Ames with different hairstyles, Ames who were kinder, Ames who were vicious, Ames who were barely human. Through sheer exposure, your brain had developed an subconscious defense mechanism. You had learned that people weren't just fingerprints, voices, or recorded habits. There was a baseline—a microscopic, unquantifiable essence that separated your partner from the 1,500,000 other iterations scattered across the fabric of time.

The Amelia currently sitting in that room was a masterpiece of mimicry. Every movement was replicated. Every joke was timed to the exact millisecond of her usual delivery. Every mannerism was present. Anyone would see it was just Ame.

But you weren't anyone else. And deep within your chest, an instinct born of pure thought.

That isn't her.

You stared through the glass, your breath hitching.

As if sensing your gaze, the girl behind the desk glanced up. She caught your eye through the doorway. She didn't falter. She smiled—that exact, endearing, familiar smile—and offered a cheerful wave before returning to her phone call. You forced your hand to rise, mimicking a casual wave back, your muscles stiff and mechanical.

She wasn't acting strange. That was the most terrifying part. It was as if someone—or something—had harvested every observable trait of Amelia Watson, every memory, every quirk, and poured it into a flawless, seamless disguise.

Your fingers tightened around the edge of the case file, the cardboard crumpling under the sudden, violent pressure of your grip.

You didn't know where the real Ame was. You didn't know what had happened to her. You didn't know what to do, and you had absolutely zero evidence. You only knew one terrifying fact.

That wasn't your Ame.

So you lowered your eyes back to the paperwork. You forced yourself to continue working.

For the next few hours, you buried yourself in the mundane mechanics of the bureau. You answered emails. You reviewed dense, multi-page reports. You made necessary phone calls, your voice steady and professional. You acted normal. Or, at the very least, you tried to. You really did.

You spent those hours desperately trying to convince yourself that you were imagining things. That the exhaustion of the job was finally getting to you. That you had spent too many years around the fundamentally impossible, and your brain was bound to start seeing problems where there weren't any.

That had to be it. It had to be. Because every single time you stole a glance toward Amelia's office, she was right there. The more you looked at her, the more she seemed completely fine.

But the feeling didn't fade. If anything, it grew stronger.

It manifested as a dull, throbbing pressure behind your eyes. A tight, cold knot in your stomach. It was a localized certainty that made absolutely no logical sense. Eventually, the psychological friction became too much to bear. You couldn't take it anymore.

You stood up from your desk, walked across the floor toward her office, and stepped inside.

Amelia looked up instantly. "Oh?" She spun slightly in her chair, tilting her head. "What's up?"

The smile appeared on her face without a hitch—natural, effortless, the exact same expression she had worn thousands of times before.

You leaned your shoulder against the wooden doorway, crossing your arms. "Nothing."

"Mhm."

"I'm serious," you said.

"No yeah totally, I definitely believe you."

She turned seamlessly back toward her monitor, her fingers dancing

across the keys, reading through reports. She was the absolute picture of workplace normality. To mask your scrutiny, you grabbed a nearby case file from her shelf and opened it, pretending to scan the pages.

The silence stretched between you, thick and heavy.

Eventually, she spoke up, her tone conversational. "You finish the Lawson case?"

"Mostly."

"The guy with the fake insurance claim?"

"Yeah."

"He finally confess?"

"No."

"He definitely did it," she murmured, clicking a mouse.

"He definitely did."

"Called it."

You couldn't help yourself. The urge to test the waters overrode your caution. "What was the bet again?"

She answered instantly, without a single millisecond of hesitation. "You owe me twenty bucks."

Correct. It was a petty bet from nearly six months ago. One almost nobody else in the bureau—or the world—could possibly know about.

You pushed further. "What'd you spend it on?"

"You still haven't paid me," she shot back smoothly.

"Answer the question, Ame."

"Coffee."

Correct again. Exactly correct. It was a seamless retrieval of information, delivered without a single pause or micro-expression of doubt. She continued typing as though nothing out of the ordinary was happening.

But you couldn't stop. You asked another question. Then another. Then another.

You fired off little things. Random things. Deeply buried shared memories, private inside jokes, obscure past cases, fragments of old conversations, specific tactical details. She answered every single one. She navigated the labyrinth of your shared history like she had lived every single moment of it herself.

At one point, you actually began to feel stupid. A wave of intense self-doubt washed over you. Maybe you really had finally lost your mind. Maybe this was just Amelia, and all those years of enduring temporal paradoxes had finally broken something vital in your head. You almost laughed at yourself. You opened your mouth, completely prepared to offer a self-deprecating apology for acting so strange.

Then—a small pause.

It was barely noticeable. A microscopic hitch in her rhythm.

You asked another question. She answered correctly, but her shoulders tensed, lifting just a fraction of an inch.

Another question. Another correct answer. But this time, there was a tiny, measurable delay. Her fingers stopped typing entirely.

A third question. A fourth. A fifth.

She wasn't even looking at her monitor anymore. Now, she was looking directly at you. Watching you. Studying you.

The bright, easy smile was gone. Not entirely, but it had weakened into something rigid, forced, and defensive. You continued pressing, trying your absolute best to sound casual, but you were failing miserably.

She knew you were failing. You knew she knew.

The atmosphere in the room slowly became suffocating, the tension growing thicker with every hollow exchange of words. Finally, she let out a long, exhausted sigh—the exact kind of heavy sigh Amelia made when she was dealing with particularly stubborn suspects or uncooperative clients.

"What?" you asked, finally lowering the file.

"What what?" she countered.

"What are you doing, Ame?"

"Working."

"No, you're not."

She leaned back in her chair, locking her eyes onto yours. "What are *you* doing?"

The walls of the room suddenly felt much closer, narrowing the space between you. You stared at her. She stared right back at you. Neither of you moved. Neither of you spoke. The silence was deafening.

And then, something inside your chest finally snapped. You were tired of the pretending. Tired of the agonizing second-guessing. Tired of wondering if you were going insane. So, you simply said the words out loud.

"You're not my Ame."

Everything stopped.

The ambient office noise beyond the window—the ringing phones, the humming printers, the muffled chatter of the outer bureau—suddenly felt miles away, entirely muted. A profound, heavy silence filled the space between you.

Amelia didn't move. She didn't blink. She didn't laugh it off, she didn't deny it, and she amazingly didn't act confused. She didn't ask what you meant by that. Nothing.

For several agonizing seconds, she simply stared at you. Then, slowly, painfully, her face darkened. It wasn't an expression of anger. It was something closer to profound exhaustion. A wave of frustration and a bitterness so incredibly old it looked worn smooth over lifetimes.

She lowered her gaze away from yours. She raised her right hand and started biting at one of her fingernails. Hard. It was a jagged, raw, nervous habit. It was a tic you had never, in all your years, seen your Amelia do.

Then, finally, she broke the silence. "How?"

Her voice was quiet. The question sounded entirely genuine. It wasn't accusatory, and it wasn't defensive. It was just deeply confused.

Almost hurt.

You stared at her. She stared back, waiting for the logistical breakdown, the forensic proof of her failure. You opened your mouth to explain, then closed it. The terrifying truth was that you didn't have a real, tangible answer.

"I don't know."

Her jaw tightened.

"I don't know," you repeated, your voice softening. "I just knew."

She let out a laugh. It was a short, ugly, hollow laugh. There was no humor in it, no amusement—just pure, unadulterated frustration. "Of course." Another dry laugh escaped her. "Of course that's the answer."

She rubbed her face with both hands, looking suddenly very, very tired. Far more tired than she had seemed all morning.

You took a slow step forward into the office. "Where is she?"

Immediately, her expression flipped. The weary irritation sharpened into instant, volatile anger. "Shut up."

"What happened to her? Where—"

"I said shut up!"

"Where's Amelia?"

Her hand slammed violently against the wooden desk. The sudden, booming crack of palms on wood made you jump.

"IT DOESN'T MATTER!"

The words echoed fiercely through the small room. For a long moment, neither of you moved, the vibration of her shout still hanging in the air. Then, she stood up abruptly, her chair rolling backward until it hit the filing cabinets. Her eyes were burning.

"Why does it matter?" she demanded, her voice rising.

"It matters because—"

"Because what?!" She took a sharp step toward you. "What changes?"

"A lot changes."

"Does it?" Her voice cracked, just a fraction, the anger giving way to something desperate. "What exactly changes?"

She gestured wildly down at herself—at the entire flawless presentation. The hat. The trench coat. The pocket watch clutched in her hand. Everything.

"I know all her memories," she claimed, taking another step forward. "I know every single case." Another step. "I know every joke." Another. "I know every conversation we've ever had."

The anger in her chest was building, but it wasn't explosive anymore. It was desperate. Almost pleading.

"I know you."

The words hit you significantly harder than they should have. Because as you looked at her, you realized she wasn't lying. She meant them. You could hear the profound weight in every syllable, every word. She wasn't an impostor pulling a malicious con. She knew you. She knew your habits, your preferences, your flaws. Probably as well as your Amelia did. Maybe, given the infinite nature of the timelines, even better.

"I can do this job," she whispered, her voice lowering to a desperate pitch. "I can be her. I can be your Ame."

You looked at her. Really, truly looked at her.

It wasn't because she stopped looking like Amelia. It wasn't because she stopped sounding like her. It was because the profound, crushing pain swimming behind her eyes wasn't familiar to you.

That specific brand of agony belonged to someone else. Someone carrying entirely different scars, different losses, a different history. It was the weight of a different Amelia Watson entirely.

She flinched under your gaze and looked away, her jaw clenched tight. When she spoke again, her voice was barely audible.

"...Just let me stay."

You didn't answer. She let out another bitter, quiet laugh. "Everything here is perfect." Her eyes drifted longingly around the office, taking in

the mahogany desk, the neatly organized files, the framed photographs, the small, quiet life your Amelia had built here.

"Yours is nearly everything," the bitterness in her voice deepened, a profound envy bleeding through, "that my timeline was."

You stayed entirely silent, watching her shoulders slump. She swallowed hard, the anger completely draining out of her, leaving only a hollow shell. She finally looked back up at you. And for the first time all morning, she didn't look like a brilliant, eccentric detective. She looked like a refugee. Someone who had been running through the harsh, cold fabric of time for a very, very long time.

"Just let me enjoy this," she whispered, her voice cracking beneath the weight of her plea. "A little longer."

A painful smile appeared on her lips—small, fragile, and utterly broken. Her eyes locked onto yours, begging for compliance.

"Everything's the same," she whispered. "So what difference does it make?"

And somehow, that was the most frightening part of it all. Because despite everything—despite the absolute, unshakeable certainty that she wasn't your Amelia—you still couldn't explain to her, or to yourself, exactly how you had known.

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